Fiscal deficit

2643. SHRI PREM CHAND GUPTA: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Government are considering setting the fiscal deficit at 5.6% of the GDP for 2001-2002 up from 5.1% for the previous year;

(b) whether this step is being considered to accommodate demands for higher investments made by various interest groups in pre-Budget meeting; and

(c) if so, what steps are being taken to cater to this increased Government debt?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI BALASAHEB VIKHE PATIL): (a) No, Sir. In fact fiscal deficit as a proportion of gross domestic product at current prices is budgeted lower at 4.7 per cent for 2001-2002 as against a revised estimate of 5.1 per cent for 2000-2001.

(b) and (c) Does not arise.

Pending income tax refund cases

2644. SHRI K.M. KHAN: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that there is enormous delay by income tax authorities in repaying the excess tax paid by the assessess;

(b) if so, the number of such cases and the period since when these cases are pending alongwith the reasons therefor;

(c) the steps taken by Government to clear such cases; and

(d) by when these cases will be cleared?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI GINGEE N. RAMACHANDRAN): (a) to (d) All possible efforts are made for early and prompt disposal of refund claims. Government have consistently been impressing upon the Chief Commissioners of Income tax, the need for taking effective steps for elimination of delay in issue of income tax refunds. However, the assessing officers who process the refund claims manually, need some time to process the refund claims depending upon various factors

namely,workload available manpower, time taken for verification of payment challans etc. Because of these reasons there is some time lag between the date of filing of return and the date of issuance of refund. In some cases refunds are delayed because there is a deficiency in the return because of which the refund cannot be issued unless the deficiency is rectified by the assessee. The details regarding claims for refunds pending, disposed of and the balance outstandings for the period 1998-99 to 2000-2001 (upto 30.9.2000) are as follows:

Financial year	No. of refund claims	No. of claims disposed	Balance outstanding
1998-99	248,170	147,672	100,498
1999-2000	516,095	357,703	158,392
2000-2001 (upto 30.9.2000)	359,252	207,307	151,945

Waiving of loan of Bihar

†2645. SHRIMATI KUM KUM RAI: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government would waive the loan of Bihar amounting to Rs. 10583 crores after the division of Bihar;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI BALASAHEB VIKHE PATIL): (a) No, Sir.

(b) Does not arise.

(c) Debt position of all States has been assessed by the Eleventh Finance Commission who have recommended devolutions from the Centre to the States. Central support to the State of undivided Bihar has been substantially increased from Rs. 24656 crores under TFC award to Rs. 57278 crores under EFC. Out of this, Rs. 45174.42 crores has been allocated as the share of Bihar after Reorganisation. The Ways & Means limits of the State of Bihar has been

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.